REMARKS

Applicant and applicant's attorney express appreciation to the Examiner for the courtesies extended during the recent telephonic interview held on January 24, 2003. The claim amendments made by this paper are consistent with the proposed claim amendments discussed during the interview.

In the Office Action dated September 25, 2002, all of the claims were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Thurlow et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,917,489)[1]. Claim 1 was also rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, 2nd paragraph because the Examiner considered the term "chain of commands" to be unclear. The amended claims do not include the term "chain of commands." Accordingly, this rejection is now moot.[2]

By this paper, claims 2-8, 13-19 and 23-32 have been cancelled, new Claims 33-45 have been added and claims 1 and 12 have been amended. Accordingly, following this Amendment, claims 1, 9-12, 20-22 and 33-42 now remain pending.

As discussed during the telephonic interview, and as reflected by the amended claims, the applicant's invention is generally directed to the customizing of messaging operations that are performed on electronic messages. In one embodiment, the invention includes a method comprising the storage of a standard command that is based on a standard Internet protocol, the storage of a user-created command that can be used for manipulating an electronic message, the assignment of a priority to the user-created command relative to a standard priority of the standard command, and execution of at least one of the standard and user-created commands according to their relative priority.

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[1] Applicants reserve the right to challenge the status of the Thurlow patent as a proper 102(e) prior art reference at any appropriate time, should it arise.

[2] The Examiner interpreted the term "chain of commands" as "multiple commands that may be executed." At this time, applicants neither agree nor disagree with the Examiner's interpretation of the term "chain of commands" because this issue is now moot. However, applicants reserve the right to correct or reject challenge the Examiner's interpretation of the term "chain of commands" at any appropriate time, should it arise.

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As reflected in the new dependent claims, the recited method may also include registration of the commands in an event-binding database, sorting of the commands according to their assigned priority, and identifying what commands are to be executed.

As discussed during the telephonic interview, the Thurlow patent is generally directed to a "Rules Wizard" that is an object oriented interface for creating and editing rules with natural language components for processing electronic messages. "The Rules Wizard allows creation of rules in a step-by-step manner by selecting natural language phrases representing conditions, actions, and exceptions. As rule components are selected by the user, the current rule is displayed in a natural language format." (ThurlowAbstract).

Although the Thurlow patent mentions that "actions are organized by priority and are executed in order of priority in order to avoid [] problems" (Col. 9, ll. 59-61), Thurlow does not disclose nor suggest that commands are assigned user-defined priority relative to the standard priority of standard commands for controlling when the commands are executed, as recited in the amended claims. Rather, in Thurlow, a user may determine when a rule is to be applied by utilizing a condition that is specified as a natural language expression. See Col. 11, ll. 32-46. (e.g., "the rule will be applied to messages as they are received...after an incoming message is first read, or when an outgoing message is sent...")

Accordingly, the Thurlow patent fails to disclose or suggest a method that includes storing a standard command that is based on a standard Internet protocol, storing a user-created command that can be used for manipulating an electronic message, assigning a priority to the user-created command relative to the standard priority of the standard command, and execution of at least one of the standard and user-created commands according to their relative priority, as recited in independent claims 1 and 12. Nor does Thurlow make mention that commands,

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including user-defined commands and standard commands, are sorted according to their relative priority, as recited in some of the dependent claims.

For at least the foregoing reasons, the pending claims (1, 9-12, 20-22 and 33-42) are neither anticipated nor made obvious by the disclosure provided in the Thurlow patent. Accordingly, for at least these reasons, the applicants respectfully request favorable consideration and prompt allowance of the pending claims.

In the event that the Examiner finds remaining impediment to a prompt allowance of this application that may be clarified through a telephone interview, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorney.

Dated this 12th day of February, 2003.

Respectfully submitted,

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE
(Serial No. 09/464,348)

<u>In the claims</u>:

Claims 2-8, 13-19 and 23-32 have been cancelled.

New Claims 33-42 have been added as recited above.

Claims 1 and 12 have been amended as follows:

1. (Amended)   In a messaging system used for exchanging information, the system utilizing standard Internet protocol, a method for extending the protocol to allow for the ability to customize messaging operations performed on an electronic message without deviating from the protocol specification, the method comprising the steps of:

storing a standard command, wherein the standard command is based on a standard Internet protocol;

storing a user-created command, wherein the user-defined command is based on extensions of the standard Internet protocol, and wherein the standard command and the user-created command are used for manipulating the message;

[constructing a chain of commands; and

executing the chain of commands to manipulate the message.]

<u>assigning a user-defined priority to the user-created command relative to an assigned priority of the standard command; and</u>

<u>executing at least one of the standard command and the user-created command in order of priority.</u>

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE
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12. (Amended) A computer program product for implementing a method for extending standard Internet protocol to allow for the ability to customize messaging operations performed on an electronic message without deviating from the protocol specification, the computer program product comprising:

a computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for executing the acts of:

storing a standard command, wherein the standard command is based on a standard Internet protocol;

storing a user-created command, wherein the user-defined command is based on extensions of the standard Internet protocol, and wherein the standard command and the user-created command are used for manipulating the message;

[constructing a chain of commands; and

executing the chain of commands to manipulate the message.]

assigning a user-defined priority to the user-created command relative to an assigned priority of the standard command; and

executing at least one of the standard command and the user-created command in order of priority.

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